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THE PROBLEM OF TERMINOLOGICAL EQUIVALENCE IN SPECIALIZED TRANSLATION

In today's world of globalization, scientific and technological progress, and the rapid exchange of information, the role of specialized translation is rapidly increasing. Terminology is generally a source of information and a tool for mastering a particular specialty [1, p. 81]. Specialized texts are professional materials from such fields as engineering, medicine, law, economics, and information technology. The main challenge translators face

in this area is achieving terminological equivalence – finding accurate equivalents for specific terms in another language without losing meaning, style, or conceptual content [2, p. 308].

1. The Essence of Terminological Equivalence.

The concept of equivalence in translation studies refers to the preservation of the meaning, function, and stylistic value of the original in translation. Terminological equivalence is the ability of a term in the target language to precisely correspond to the term in the source language, conveying the same concept within a specific scientific or professional domain.

Catford (1965) distinguishes between formal correspondence, which attempts to map the structure of the source language onto the target language, and textual equivalence, which focuses on the actual correspondence between segments of the source and target texts [4, p. 27].

However, in specialized translation, equivalence is often partial or conditional, since different languages possess their own terminological systems, which have evolved under the influence of cultural, historical, and scientific traditions.

2. Main Difficulties in Achieving Terminological Equivalence.

2.1. Lack of a Direct Equivalent.

One of the most significant challenges in specialized translation is the absence of a direct equivalent for a term in the target language. This problem arises when a particular concept or phenomenon exists in one culture or scientific tradition but does not yet have a linguistic or conceptual counterpart in another. In such cases, the translator must find creative solutions to ensure that the meaning is accurately conveyed and remains comprehensible to the target audience. Baker (2011) emphasizes that a direct equivalent is rarely available, and the translator must always consider the meaning in context [3, p. 55].

There are several reasons why direct equivalents may not exist:

Novelty of the Concept.

Many scientific and technological terms emerge faster than dictionaries or terminology databases can record them. For example, terms such as blockchain, deepfake, or metaverse appeared relatively recently, and translators initially struggled to render them accurately. Over time, Ukrainian equivalents such as «блокчейн», «діпфейк», and «метавсесвіт» became established, often through transliteration rather than direct translation.

Cultural and Legal Differences.

Some terms are deeply rooted in specific cultural, legal, or institutional systems that have no exact parallels in the target language. For example the English term common law has no direct equivalent in many legal systems

based on continental (civil) law, including Ukrainian. Translators must therefore use descriptive translation or contextual adaptation, e.g., система загального права.

The term ombudsman originally referred to a Scandinavian institution of public advocacy; now it is widely borrowed but still may require explanation in contexts where the concept is unfamiliar.

Some terms do not have an established translation due to the novelty of the concept or the specificity of the field. For example, in IT, the term cloud computing initially had no precise Ukrainian equivalent, so variants such as khmarni obchyslennia («cloud computing») or khmarni servisy («cloud services») were used [2, p. 315].

The absence of a direct equivalent is not simply a linguistic problem, – it reflects deeper differences between cultures, systems of knowledge, and professional practices. A skilled translator must therefore act not just as a linguistic mediator but as an intercultural communicator and sometimes even as a terminology developer. Overcoming such challenges requires both linguistic creativity and solid subject-matter expertise.

2.2. Differences in the Scope of Meaning.

In one language, a term may cover a broader or narrower concept than in another. This creates the risk of semantic shift, where the translation conveys only part of the original meaning.

2.3. Differences in Term Formation.

In English, analytical term formation is predominant (e.g., data base, machine learning), whereas in Ukrainian, synthetic structures are more common (baza danykh, mashynne navchannia). This requires structural adaptation in translation.

2.4. Polysemy and Homonymy.

A single term may have several meanings in different contexts. For example, charge in law means «accusation», while in technology it means «electric charge». The translator must accurately determine the field of use.

3. Strategies and Methods for Achieving Equivalence.

3.1. Using Standards and Terminological Databases.

Modern translators rely on international standards (ISO, ASTM) and specialized resources such as: IATE (InterActive Terminology for Europe), Termium Plus, Proz.com Term Search. These tools help find standardized equivalents and ensure consistency in translation.

3.2. Contextual Translation.

When no direct equivalent exists, the translator selects a functional analogue that most accurately reflects the meaning in a given context.

3.3. Descriptive Translation.

This method is used to render new or highly specialized concepts. For example: middleware → «intermediate software»; due diligence → «detailed financial assessment of a company».

3.4. Transcription and Transliteration.

This technique is applied to terms and names already integrated into the target language, e.g., laser → «лазер», byte → «байт».

4. The Role of the Translator in the Formation of Terminological Systems.

A translator functions not only as a mediator between languages, but also as a creator of new terms. Through translation, foreign concepts are adapted into the Ukrainian scientific discourse. According to A. Chesterman, this technique is referred to as introduction of a loan-based neologism as a translation solution [5, p. 95]. The quality of translation determines the accuracy of professional communication, and therefore influences the development of science itself.

Translators play a multifaceted role in specialized translation, functioning not merely as intermediaries between languages, but also as creators, standardizers, educators, and cultural mediators. Their contribution is essential for the accurate adaptation of foreign concepts into the target language, ensuring both terminological precision and conceptual clarity within professional and scientific discourse.

5. Conclusions.

The problem of terminological equivalence remains one of the central issues in specialized translation. It requires from the translator not only high linguistic proficiency but also in-depth subject knowledge, the ability to navigate terminological systems, and to work with international sources.

Achieving precise equivalence is possible only through the combination of linguistic competence, subject expertise, and terminological unification. Thus, the translator becomes an active participant in the process of standardizing scientific terminology and fostering intercultural communication.

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